SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Learning & Engagement Teaching Kit

Stage 5 & 6

Acknowledgements

Resource Development

Contact

For information concerning the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Learning & Engagement program, contact:

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"Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.

Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.

As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music."

Richard Gill AO
(1941 – 2018)

Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

Background: Syllabus Topic
Background: Baroque Period (c1600-1750)

Historic Context

Many countries were expanding their borders.

A snapshot of events include:

Year	Event
1603	Elizabeth I dies.
1606	Dutch explored land on Australian mainland
1640	English Civil War Frederick the Great expands Prussia
1642	Abel Tasman claims Tasmania for the Dutch, later claimed by Britain; astronomer Galileo dies
1665-6	Great Plague and Fire of London
1669	Death of Rembrandt
1682	Peter the Great becomes Tsar of Russia.
1687	Isaac Newton published Principia, one of the most important works in the history of science
1719	William Defoe writes Robinson Crusoe, considered to be the first English novel
1737	Death of violin maker Antonio Stradivarius
1750	Death of JS Bach

Features of Baroque Music

Throughout the Baroque era the "doctrine of affect" was observed by most composers. This meant that a composer focused on one mood or "affection" that was sustained throughout a piece. It was achieved through motivic development and use of ritornello, essentially the important musical motif upon which a piece was created with return throughout the movement a unified it.

Performers of ten had more licence to improvise and fill in their parts but realising harmonic progressions or extemporising upon melodic material.

Pitch (Melody and Harmony)

- Melodic work mostly heard in upper registers in the early Baroque
- Much melodic material was constructed with scales and arpeggios, therefor difficult to sing.
- Pitch devices such as sequence, imitation, inversion, and melodic variate used to maintain the *affekt* of the work.
- Melodies embellished by a range of ornaments and extemporisation (improvised elaboration during performance).
- Use of structured harmonic forms such as ground bass, cycle of5ths.
- Harmonies on keyboard instruments were "realised" from figured bass.
- Use of pedal notes in lowed and sometimes upper parts created harmonic tension, along with suspensions that always eventually resolved.

Duration (Rhythm and Metre)

- Use of motor rhythm to keep movement and drive music forward in both melodic passages and the bassline.
- Inability for some instruments to sustain meant that lots of short note values were used, and also why longer melodic lines were often ornamented with short note values.
- Basso continuo, a continuing (like a walking) bassline was the foundation upon which the piece was based, providing a purposeful forward rhythmic drive.

Tone Colour (timbre)

- Strings and keyboard instruments (predominantly organ and harpsicord) were the basis of the orchestra.
- The plucked strings of the harpsicord were a distinctive tone colour of the era.
- Wind instruments including natural trumpets, wooden flutes, recorders, and bassoons and oboes were also sometimes added for colour.

Tonality

- In the 1600's the church modes, established in the Middle Ages, were most commonly used though more and more composers were writing in Ionian or Aeolian mode.
- Added to this were numerous systems of tuning keyboard instruments in place, which effective the way chords sounds and the intervals between the successive

pitches in a scale.

- At some point around 1700 the terms major and minor came into use and by the time of Bach equal temperament (the way we tune our scales today) was becoming more common.
- Major, Melodic, and harmonic minor scales created the tonality of pieces, replacing the church modes of earlier times.

Texture

Initially the period had clear homophonic textures with a melody supported by chords, however by the end of the period polyphonic texture was evident in much orchestral writing. The journey to this texture included a lot of imitative and canonic writing. Counterpoint (tune against tune) occurred more frequently as the period went on, reaching its grandest form in the Fugue.

Dynamics and Expressive Devices

The limited technology on keyboard instruments of the time meant that it was difficult to sustain sound and achieve a wide range of dynamic variation. Instruments were added or taken out to create louder and softer contrasts.

Terraced dynamics were used without marked gradations in volume. Often the dynamic choices were left to the discretion of the leader of the ensemble. Ornamentation of melodic line was common, and many styles of ornaments were used by players, not usually notated by the composers.

This led to extemporisation in solo passages, where the soloist would improvise around the melodic line, often on repeated sections for musical variety.

Structure and Genres

The ritornello became an important structural device. Literally meaning a returning theme, composers used all the techniques of motif development, including repetition, fragmentation, sequence, inversion, augmentation, diminution, and variation, to keep the music interesting.

The more common forms used had opportunity to repeat smaller sections of a work including binary, ternary, rondo and variation forms, to create a longer movement. The chaconne or ground bass above which variations would be created was popular in the early 1600s and by the 1700s composers had started exploring fugue.

The Baroque saw an increase in composition genres using orchestral forces including the concerto (both solo concerto and concerto grosso which used a group of soloists), the sonata and dance suite; and accompanying vocal forms such as oratorios, cantatas, and opera.

The Baroque Orchestra Instrumentation

The strings and continue were the backbone of Baroque orchestra music. Violins gradually replaced the viols of the Renaissance times and the continue (a keyboard instrument such as harpsicord or organ and low string such as a cello or viol de gamba)

Wind instruments were used sparingly for colour contrasts or solo passages, whilst brass instruments featured most often in church music working as a family, although as the period continued more and more as an additional tone colour contrast in the orchestra.

Most ensembles had 12-15 players.

Techniques of Orchestration

The basso continuo reading from figured bass, was used to fill in the harmonies and texture and used throughout a work as the main accompanying section of the orchestra.

VIVALDI Concerto for 4 Violins in B minor (first published 1711)

Composer Background

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

This concerto was written in what was considered one of Vivaldi's most extravagant compositions and one of his best-known works during his lifetime. It is unusual in that it was written in what was then a hardly used key – B minor – and reserved for expressive or in this case, impressive effects. The four soloists are continually vying for the lead role, intruding on the *tutti ritornello* and trying to claim the last word. It was first published in his earliest concerto collection *L'estro armonico Op3* in 1711 which was printed as a set of part books without a score but expanded Vivaldi's reputation and making his music a model of many imitators. Even J.S. Bach made an arrangement of this work for four harpsicord soloists, and interestingly he changed the key as well.
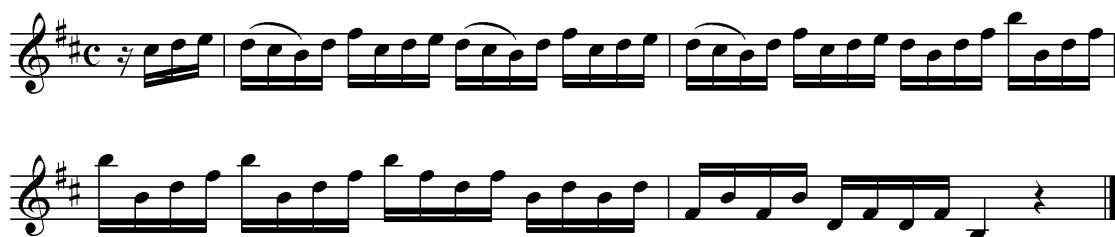

Listening Guide
Overview:

The concerto is in three movements, the standard Fast – slow-fast form.

Movement 1 is based upon a ritornello or returning theme in 2 parts:

The first is characterised by repeated pedal noted and outlines the tonic chord of B minor.

The second part of the ritornello has repeated scale fragments

Again this theme is reinforcing the tonic and outlines the arpeggio of a B minor chord.

The sequential patterning of the ritornello allows for harmonic movement and the numerous ostinato patterns inhibit the harmonic movement, building tension. This is further achieved by the continuous relentlessness semiquaver vote values, which become as rhythmic constant.

Movement II Largo – *Larghetto/Adagio – Largo*

The opening largo is based upon a dotter rhythm figure in between which the four solo violins take it in turns to weave scalic passages. The whole movement is very much a harmonic progression elaborated upon by dotted rhythmic patterns, arpeggios and pedal points.

Movement III - *Allegro*

The final movement in 6/8 time is a jig, again based upon a ritornello which determines the musical material of the whole movement.

Typically, it is characterised by arpeggio and scale passages, treated sequentially.

Instrumentation

- 4 violin parts, which were played by more than one player, and the number of people [laying the line was either 1 (marked as a solo on the score) or tutti meaning all.
- 2 viola parts;
- Cello
- Continuo, printed as a figured bass for harpsicord and violone (a large violin, mostly similar to a double bass).

Audio Excerpts

Access the Spotify playlist by visiting the following link:

Link

Excerpt No.	Movement	Time	Activity	Page
1	Movement 1	0.00 - 0.07	Activity 1	11
2	Movement 2	complete	Activity 1, 2 & 3	11, 12 & 14
3	Movement 3	complete	Activity 5	17

Score Excerpts (Click below to access)
Link

Excerpt No.	Movement	Bars	Activity	Page
1	Movement 1: *Maestoso*	complete	Activity 1 & 3	11 & 14
2	Movement 2: *Largo*	1 -15	Activity 4	16
3	Movement 3: *Maestoso*	1 - 69	Activity 5	17

Learning Activities
Activity 1: Aural

Ritornello
Audio Excerpt 1 (0.00 - 0.07) **Score Excerpt 1** Movement 1 complete

Teacher writes on a stave on the board the first four bars including only the clef, key sig, time sig and first 2 beats of bar 1 and the third beat of bar 4 (with a rest following so as not to confuse the students). Obviously include more cluses if your students require them.

Students listen to the first seven seconds of Audio track 1 whilst completing the first violin part.

The ritornello is in 2 parts. Here is part B, which is played immediately after the excerpt above:

Now listen to the excerpt from the start to 54 seconds a couple of times while the students answer the following questions:

a. What family of instruments is most prominent in this excerpt?
b. What keyboard instrument is making the tinkling strumming accompaniment sound?
c. What word best describes the tempo of the music?
d. The above theme is called a ritornello. How is the ritornello used in the excerpt?
e. Discuss how the composer creates contrast in the excerpt.

Activity 2: Composition Creating counterpoint

Audio Excerpt 2 Movement 1 complete

From the opening of the piece, after the first statement of the ritornello theme, Vivaldi has created a sense of busy movement by the intertwining of layers, creating a polyphonic texture.

Play the 2-part example below:

The opening ritornello establishes clearly the tonality of B minor, with the counterpoint (tune against tune) of the 4 violins all outlining the notes of chord I and V in the tonic key, demonstrated in the 4 violin parts below:

a. Play through each of the lines
b. What is the tonic and dominant chord in the key of B minor?
c. Identify the notes in B minor and F sharp minor chords?
   (I=BDF# V=F#A#C#)
d. Note that each part has repetition in it, mostly with ostinatos, but is different to the patterns in the other lines.
e. Now use the bass line below to identify whether chord I or V is used on each crotchet beat.

As you can see the harmonic progression or chord sequence for this section is (with B minor chord = I, F# major cord = V): i i i V | i V i V| i i i i | i i i V |

Composition Task

Use the information below to create your own 8 bar counterpoint, also based solely on chords I and V in the key of A minor.

Chord 1 = ACE; Chord V = EG#B (Use chord IV if you wish with notes DFA in the second part of the composition, if you wish to explore the harmony further)

Steps:

1. Rule up manuscript with 4 bars per line, for four instrument parts

2. Write the chord progression you are going to use either as roman numerals or as guitar chords.

3. Make sure that each part has notes from the appropriate chord occurring on the start of each beat

4. Begin by writing your ritornello theme. Remember that this style of Baroque melody was characterised by arpeggios and scalic passages.

5. Then creating the rhythmic ostinatos for each accompanying line.

6. Use available technology to craft the composition and play it for class feedback.

Activity 3: Listening/Performing/Composing

Score Excerpt Movement 1 complete
Audio Excerpt Movement 1 complete

The Circle of 5ths is one of the great Baroque composition techniques, which has continued to permeate other subsequent musical styles. See the information page for some interesting facts about the circle of 5ths:

https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/music-theory/what-is-the-circle-of-fifths/

Vivaldi has used the Circle of 5ths as a technique for modulation and development of the ritornello. The cycle of 5ths is demonstrated in the example below. It was a harmonic device used in the Baroque period to support the use of sequence, suspension and modulation.

In the excerpt from the score below identify the sequences in the top part with a bracket.

Vivaldi has used two chords per bar, changing on the minim beat. The table below identifies the chords used in this passage. NB excerpt starts on the third beat.

Bar	Beat	Key
1	3	B minor
2	1	E Minor
2	3	A Minor
3	1	D Major
3	3	G Major
4	1	C# minor
4	3	F# major
5	1	B Minor

Now listen to Movement 1 (0.00-0.07). This excerpt can be heard 39 seconds into the piece.

Below is the circle of 5ths in the key of F major. Note the chords are built on the notes of the F major scale without additional accidentals:

F	Bb	Edim	Am	Dm	Gm	C	F

The next chord is always built on the note a 5th below the chord before
Now complete the cycle of 5ths in D minor

Dm	Gm	C	F				

Choose one of the two circle of 5th patterns above and play the pattern until it is learnt. Then in groups play the patterns while taking turns to improvise a melody about it. Experiment with use of:

    a. arpeggiated chords

    b. scale like passages

    c. sequences

Then if you are looking for an additional challenge, try improvising as a pair in 2 parts and experiment with sequence and imitation

By now you should be quite familiar with the sound of this chord progression. Follow the score for Movement 1 of the concerto for Four Violins by Vivaldi and see if you can identify other examples of the use of the circle of 5ths in this movement.

Activity 4: Performance/Composition

Score Excerpt Movement 2 (Bars 1- 15) **Audio Excerpt** Movement 2 complete
Use score excerpt 2 as the basis of a class performance

Preparation questions:

a. What is the time signature?

b. What is the key?

c. What is meant by the terms solo and tutti? Consider who will play the solo parts.

d. What clef is used by each line? What instruments would be best suited to these clefs from the available instruments in your classroom?

e. What is the tempo of the movement? What English word best describes it?

f. Remind the students that dotted quaver semiquaver patterns cannot sound like triplets.

g. Listen to the excerpt for familiarity before playing a couple of times.

h. One of the soloists in the recording demonstrates

As a class perform the 15 bars that open the second movement. If this is beyond the technical ability of all players, have the class perform on untuned percussion, so they can understand the roles of the tutti and solo parts and how the musical material has been shared across the soloists.

Activity 5: Score reading and Listening

Movement 3 **Score excerpt** (Bar 1-69) **Audio Excerpt** whole movement
Study the score excerpt while you listen to the audio excerpt and answer the questions.

1. What is the key of the opening of this movement?

2. What do you notice about the 4 violins parts in the first 3 bars?

3. Look at the clefs and identify what instruments would play this movement?

4. What are the numbers below the bass line for?

5. Define and then find examples of the following Baroque composition techniques in
   the score:

   a. Imitation
   b. Sequence
   c. Pedal notes
   d. Terraced dynamics
   e. Rhythmic ostinato
   f. Instruments playing in parallel thirds
   g. Melody based upon triads and arpeggios
   h. Melody embellished by ornaments

6. This piece was considered extremely ambitious in terms of the technical challenges
   for the soloists. Looking at the excerpt from movement 3, what do you think are the
   areas of challenge for the soloist? Consider things like tempo, range and consistency
   of notes and the expressive techniques in your answer as well as pitch and rhythm.

7. To what key has the music modulated in bar 15?

8. Another interesting rhythmic device popular in the Baroque period was the hemiola. It
   often occurred in 2 bars of triple time, where the composer seemed to suddenly go
   into duple time. Likewise, in duple time, a composer could group the notes to change
   the metric feel to a three beat pattern.

   A good example of this can be found in the solo between bars 22-37. Find and mark
   this on your score.

GLOSSARY

Musical term	Definition
a2	Two instruments play the given pitch.
Accompaniment	The part of the music that is not the main theme or tune, but the musical support.
Da capo	From the beginning.
Dissonant	The term describing the sound when notes played simultaneously do not blend together but clash.
Duration	Referring to the rhythmic aspects of music, length of sounds or silence.
Dynamics and expression	Volume and choice of how the sound is made.
Expressive techniques	Ways of playing or articulating a sound often related to the interpretation of a style.
Extended Techniques	When a player is required to play their instrument in an untraditional manner, such as blowing into a trumpet without the mouthpiece or tapping the belly of a stringed instrument.
Forte (*f*)	Loud
Fortepiano (*fp)*	To commence a note loudly and becoming very soft immediately after.
Graphic Notation	A method of indicating pitch, rhythm and dynamics using symbols instead of traditional musical notation.
Legato	Smoothly
Melody	Tune
Metre	The way that the beats are grouped in a piece of music, ie the number of beats in a bar
Orchestra	A group of mixed instruments comprising woodwind, brass, percussion and stringed instruments and usually directed by a conductor.
Ostinato	A repeating pattern – may be rhythm only or rhythm and pitch.
Pentatonic Scale	A scale consisting of five notes only – the most common being the 1st, 2nd 3rd, 5th, and 6th notes of the scale.
Piano (*p*)	A dynamic marking meaning soft.
Pitch	The relative highness of lowness of sounds. Discussion of pitch includes the melody and direction of pitch movement and the harmony (different parts).

Pizzicato	A technique used by string players where the sound is made by plucking the string rather than bowing it.
Program music	Music which is inspired by a story, character, place or atmosphere i.e. it is inspired by a non musical program.
Sequence	A pattern that repeats at a higher or lower pitch.
Sforzando piano (*sfp*)	To accent the start of the note loudly, then become suddenly soft.
Soundscape	Compositions of organised sounds which are describe a scene of a place.
Staccato	Playing a note so that it sounds short and detached.
Structure (form)	The plan underlying the construction or the design of a piece of music. Structure relates to the ways in which sections of music sound similar or different.
Texture	The layers of sound in a piece of music.
Timbre/Tone Colour	The particular features of a sound which distinguish one sound (instrument or singer) from another.
Tuned and Untuned percussion	Tuned percussion refers to percussion instruments which play specific pitches such as xylophones. Untuned percussion instruments include shakers, triangles and other instruments with no definable pitch.